(c) what other subjects came up for discussion at the meeting and the conclusions reached thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATA): (a) and (b) A bilateral agreement on Maritime Commercial Navigation was signed between India and Iran, during the Eight Session of the India Iran Joint Commission in New Delhi on January 3, 1995.

The agreement envisages cooperation and mutual assistance between India and Iran for the development of maritime commercial navigation and providing special facilities in respect of transit traffic of the two countries in the form of berthing of vessels, allocation of warehousing facilities, etc. apart from facilitating measures to avoid unnecessary delays in their ports.

(c) The Joint Commission meeting reviewed the range of issues in the bilateral cooperation in the fields of trade, industry, agriculture, transport and communications, energy, science and technology, cultural and consular matters. The progress of implementation of decisions taken at the Seventh India-Iran Joint Commission meeting was reviewed and modalities for speedier implementation of decisions were worked out. The Joint Commission meeting identified certain specific areas for the setting up of joint ventures such as agricultural machinery, pharmaceuticals, textiles, machine tools, auto parts, passenger cars, leather, etc. The meeting discussed ways and means of expanding cooperation in the field of research, training and engineering activities apart from reviewing the on-going negotiations relating to projects in Iran, exchanging views on the issues of bilateral trade including proposals for trade promotions in the coming period, as well identifying technical cooperation programmes between the two countries in the different fields. The Joint Commission decided that negotiations may commence on the finalisation of an agreement relating to transit trade between India, Iran, and Central Asian Republics at the earliest possible.

Pakistani premiers belligerent Statement of Kashmir

1290. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:
SHRI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention had been drawn to a statement made by Pakistan's Prime Minister, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, during an interview published in the Al Wasaat, a London based publication, that a third war between Pakistan and India could break out if the Kashmiris are indefinitely denied their right to self-determination;

(b) if so, what is Government's independent information in this regard; and

(c) what is Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) Government have seen the media reports.

(b) and (c) Pakistan has been making contradictory statements on the Security climate in the sub-continent, for its propagandistic purposes from time to time. Government are of the firm view that war or threats of war are not the means of resolving differences. The Simla Agreement provides the framework for the settlement of all differences between the two countries peacefully and through bilateral negotiations. Government could urge Pakistan to eschew its negative approach.